

Geneva Journal - Front Page
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Committee hears smoking discussion

A County Council committee meeting was held Tuesday night before the regularly scheduled council meeting to discuss smoking policy for county buildings.

A group of about 20 county workers was on hand to speak before the council on the matter of smoking in public buildings.

The council took the suggestions by the public under advisement and, according to committee member Dr. Julius Earle, the committee will present its findings to the council as early as their next meeting, April 17. A final decision will not be made at that time and he asked for more public comment.

Sheriff's deputy Steve Pruitt said that although he was a non-smoker he sympathized with those who smoke. "They are addicted just like an alcoholic or drug addict," he said, "but they make us suffer like a drunk driver who kills on the highways or a heroin addict spreads AIDS with his dirty needles." There was a sustained applause at his remarks.

Pruitt also discussed insurance

benefits and civil liabilities in cases of non-smokers bringing suit against smokers.

Sally Smith, records clerk at the courthouse, said she was afraid of fire. "There are records that go back to 1840 and cannot be replaced," she said. Smith held up a paper that had been retrieved from a wastebasket in the records room that had a cigarette hole burned through it.

Fire Marshall Dewitt Mize said that smoking is a fire hazard. "Cigarettes have caused tremendous fires in buildings in Oconee County," he said, "I want to go on record as saying we need to work out some system for controlling smoking in public buildings."

Sheriff Earl Holcomb said he would like to see designated areas set aside for smokers. "I am a smoker, and we're fooling ourselves if we think that smokers will suddenly quit. I know that smokers will smoke," he said. "If you don't designate smoking areas you'll find cigarettes put out in dangerous areas

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like trash cans. We need a phase out program."

County worker Jenny Peay said, "Please don't give us the shock treatment."

Dr. Earle said he would add a restriction for food and beverages to

the proposed amendment.

During the regularly scheduled County Council meeting the council gave permission for the aeronautics commission to seek a state grant that would pay half of a \$22,500 bid proposal to seal cracks on the runway at the airport.

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